REMARKS

These remarks are responsive to the Office Action mailed 28 Jul 2005.

Claims 1 and 12 are in the case, neither as yet allowed.

35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Felkey et al (U.S. PG Pub 2002/0161667, hereinafter Felkey) in view of Nicastro et al (U.S. Patent No. 2004/0015367, hereinafter Nicastro).

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 12 to correct a misspelled word in their respective preambles.

In their amendment filed on or about 9 April 2005 (hereinafter referred to as "previous amendment"), applicants canceled claims 2-11 and 13-26 without prejudice. Therefore, applicants believe that a mistake has been made in referring to claims 2-11 and 13-26 in this rejection over Felkey and Nicastro, and that the Examiner intends to refer only to claims 1 and 12.

In their previous amendment, applicants amended claims 1 and 12 to set forth specific characteristics of the method and system of their invention. In that amendment, they incorporated into claim 1, for example, material from

END920000176US1   17   S/N 09/815,312

dependent claims 2, 3, 7 and 10, but not from claims 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9, and over 175 lines of additional material (not included in original claims 1-26, but all of which was supported by the specification as originally filed).

As presented in applicants' previous amendment, claims 1 and 12 distinguish the Felkey and Nicastro references in the specific system configuration recited, the function and content of each system component, and in particular the content, construction, and use of user and resource profiles - both references being silent with respect to such limitations of the claims.

In the previous amendment, claims 1 and 12 were annotated with reference to the drawings in order to show support in the specification for the previously added limitations.

Felkey relates to telecommunications services, and outlines steps of ordering telecommunications and the approvals (signatures) required. He outlines associated hardware and software, and the ordering workflow on each of the hardware platforms.

Applicants' invention doesn't relate to approval processing or signatures, per se, but rather focuses on how code may be reused based on grouping various companies with similar traits. Grouping of companies allows Applicants to simplify the effort of providing various functions (such as accounting validation, approval processing, and other parts of workflow) so that code can be reused to satisfy company group requirements (as distinguished from individual

END920000176US1   18   S/N 09/815,312

companies).

In the instant case, there is in the Felkey reference
no teaching of company groups, as that concept is now
recited with greater particularity in the amended claims,
nor of controlling access to procurement resources based on
a user's company group in accordance with the newly recited
claim limitations.

The Examiner appears to agree, with the following
statement:

> Felkey et al fail to teach an inventive concept of
> providing common code defining workflow components
> common to all companies within the company group
> including accounting validation and approval
> processing.

The Examiner continues:

> ...Nicastro et al teach an inventive concept of
> providing common code defining workflow components
> common to all companies within the company group
> including accounting validation and approval processing
> (see paragraph 0153).

Nicastro refers to "company" and "project" levels,
meaning that budget codes are used which are defined either
for a specific project or for use throughout the company.
However, Nicastro is silent with respect to the specific
claim limitations introduced by the previous amendment in
the claims as to how user profiles are built, and how

END920000176US1   19   S/N 09/815,312

company and company groups are used to control access to procurement resources.

Even so, applicants do not rely solely on the above distinctions in arguing the patentability of claims 1 and 12 as currently presented, but also rely on the material added to the claims by the previous amendment and discussed below.

Referring now to the Office Action, the Examiner states that Applicant canceled all the dependent claims and incorporated their subject matter in the independent claims 1 and 12. (The Examiner is partially correct. For example, with respect to claim 1, material from claims 2, 3, 7, and 10 was incorporated in claim 1, but that from claims 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 was not (similarly, for claim 12)).

The Examiner then states:

"However, those limitations were previously rejected in the final office action mailed February 17th, 2005. The incorporation of the dependent subject matter in the previously rejected dependent claims fail to place the application in condition for allowance since the prior art teach the limitation[s] claim[ed] in the dependent claims." [Office Action, pages 4-5].

The Examiner appears to imply that the only material added to the independent claims in the previous amendment was material brought in from the dependent claims, and that such cannot place the application in condition for allowance. However, applicants respectfully traverse this characterization of the previous amendment. Of the 200

END920000176US1   20   S/N 09/815,312

lines of text in claim 1, for example, only 25 lines contain material from the original claim 1 and its dependent claims, and 175 lines contain additional material not previously included in the base claim 1 and its dependent claims (similarly for claim 12).

In the rejection of claims 1 and 12, the Examiner cites neither Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor any other art with respect to the following limitations (taken from claim 1, with claim 12 similarly limited), which applicants assert are not taught by Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor their combination, nor were included in claims 1 or 12 or their dependent claims prior to the previous amendment:

"...[providing a front end requisition and catalog server] for providing a user interface to a user at a customer company browser to access catalogs and commodities managed by said enterprise and for providing approval notices and receiving approve/reject data with respect to customer approvers;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog server from an enterprise procurement services system including requisition status, purchase order status and contracts, cost centers, currency exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase order history invoices, purchase order history receipts, and confirmations; outputs from said requisition and catalog server to said procurement services system including requisitions and positive confirmation responses;

END920000176US1   21   S/N 09/815,312

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server from said customer company browser
including submit requisition; outputs from said
requisition and catalog server to said customer
company browser including approval/rejection
notices, status display, and negative and positive
confirmations; with notice and response data being
exchanged between said requisition and catalog
server and browser;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server from a vendor system including vendor
catalogs via an enterprise electronic data
interchange application;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server from an enterprise requisition and catalog
system including postal code validation data;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server including human resource extract data from
an enterprise hub server..." [Claim 1, lines 10-
44.]

Continuing, in the rejection of claims 1 and 12, the
Examiner cites neither Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor any other
art with respect to the following limitations (taken from
claim 1, with claim 12 similarly limited), which applicants
assert were not taught by Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor their
combination, nor were included in claims 1 or 12 or their
dependent claims prior to the previous amendment:

END920000176US1   22   S/N 09/815,312

"providing said enterprise procurement services system
managed by said enterprise for accepting requisitions
from said front end requisition and catalog server
entered by said user and responsive thereto for causing
said electronic data interchange application to
generate transactions to said vendors and for
generating accounting transactions to a leveraged
procurement network data warehouse facility for said
requisitions;

> inputs to said enterprise procurement services
> system from said front end requisition and catalog
> server including requisitions and positive
> confirmation responses; and outputs to said front
> end requisition and catalog server from said
> enterprise procurement services system including
> requisition status data, purchase order status and
> contracts data, cost center data, currency
> exchange rates, general ledger accounts, purchase
> order history invoices, purchase order history
> receipts, and order confirmations;

> inputs to said enterprise procurement services
> system from said enterprise hub server including
> cost center data; and outputs to said hub server
> from said enterprise procurement services system
> including a company process control table, vendor
> master updates, and accounting detail;

> inputs to said enterprise procurement services
> system from said electronic data interchange
> application including purchase order

END920000176US1   23   S/N 09/815,312

acknowledgments, invoices, payment status and file transfer check reconstructions; and outputs from said enterprise procurement services system to said electronic data interchange application including purchase orders, invoice rejections and payments;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services system from operator terminals including process purchase orders, requests for quotes, and contracts data, create/change vendor master data, invoice processing, payment proposal data, and payment post and print;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services system including currency exchange rate data from an external financial services server; and output from said enterprise procurement services system to vendors including paper and fax purchase order documents;

inputs to said enterprise electronic data interchange application from said vendor including purchase acknowledgments and invoices, and outputs from said electronic data interchange application to said vendor including purchase orders and invoice rejections;

inputs to said enterprise electronic data interchange application including payments from a payment source and outputs from said enterprise electronic data interchange application including

END920000176US1   24   S/N 09/815,312

payments to customer electronic data interchange
applications..." [Claim 1, lines 45-103]

Continuing, in the rejection of claims 1 and 12, the
Examiner cites neither Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor any other
art with respect to the following limitations (taken from
claim 1, with claim 12 similarly limited), which applicants
assert are not taught by Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor their
combination, nor were included in claims 1 or 12 or their
dependent claims prior to the previous amendment:

"...providing said leveraged procurement network hosted
data warehouse facility for storing and monitoring said
electronic data interchange transactions and accounting
transactions..." [Claim 1, lines 104-107]

Continuing, in the rejection of claims 1 and 12, the
Examiner cites neither Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor any other
art with respect to the following limitations (taken from
claim 1, with claim 12 similarly limited), which applicants
assert are not taught by Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor their
combination, nor were included in claims 1 or 12 or their
dependent claims prior to the previous amendment:

"...providing said enterprise hub server for
transferring data between said front end requisition
and catalog server, said back-end purchasing system,
and said data warehouse facility;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
server from said enterprise procurement services
system including company process control table,

END920000176US1   25   S/N 09/815,312

vendor master updates and accounting detail;

outputs from said enterprise procurement services
hub server including human resource extract data,
extracted from customer employee data, to customer
requisition and catalog system;

outputs from said enterprise procurement services
hub server to a customer back-end purchasing
system including vendor master data, invoice
detail, payment detail and bank clearing detail
data;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
server further including cost centers data;

said customer back-end purchasing system also
receiving goods receipts from customer
receiving..." [Claim 1, lines 108 to 128].

Continuing, in the rejection of claims 1 and 12, the
Examiner cites neither Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor any other
art with respect to the following limitations (taken from
claim 1, with claim 12 similarly limited), which applicants
assert are not taught by Felkey, nor Nicastro, nor their
combination, nor were included in claims 1 or 12 or their
dependent claims prior to the previous amendment (the new
limitations start with the word "by" in the third line
below):

["specifying in said user profile for each said user a
user company and company group so as to define said

END920000176US1   26   S/N 09/815,312

controls based on company and company group by]

collecting in said user profile each of a
plurality of users into a user profile table
associating acceptable accounting and system
controls for each person authorized by a customer
company to access procurement services for
leveraging access and maintaining isolation of
data by identifying a user at log on as associated
with a particular company group;

providing in a hub server a company group human
resources file connected through a fire wall to a
requisition and catalog server for creating and
maintaining said user profile table;

said procurement services including process
requirements and data resources accessible only to
those users identified in their profiles as
members of a particular company and, therefore,
company group and including catalogs, contracts,
cost centers defining departments that can be
charged, a chart of accounts defining general
ledger account codes, entries in said user profile
table, business rules and defaults including those
affiliated with accounting and specifying fields
that must be completed in creating a requisition
and default data to be entered in those fields;

providing in each entry for a user in said user
profile a company group code, a company code, a
plant code specifying ship to location, an

END920000176US1   27   S/N 09/815,312

employee serial number, and an E-mail address;

using said company group code and said
company code responsive to user login to
associate said user with a given company in a
company group for

responsive to user selection of a shop-
from-a-catalog button on a user browser,
controlling catalog application code to
display to said user only those catalogs
for which a corresponding catalog
profile includes said user's company in
said resource profile;

specifying departments that can be
charged across companies in a company
group;

selectively allowing a user to initiate
requests for other users, view general
ledger account codes associated with
commodity codes by company group,
company group specific business rules
including accounting business rule
defaults specifying fields required to
be filled in by said user based on item
being bought..." [Claim 1, lines 139-
193].

As appears from the above analysis, claims 1 and 12
have not yet been examined in their entirety, significant

END920000176US1   28   S/N 09/815,312

limitations having been overlooked by the Examiner in rejecting these claims. Applicants understand that it is required that the entire claim be examined, and that all significant limitations be considered with respect to the prior art in order to give applicants the opportunity to discuss and explain their invention with reference to the characterization of the claims and art presented by the Examiner. In this case, applicants believe that has not yet been done.

Thus, applicants urge that the Examiner reconsider the rejection of claims 1 and 12, consider the material quoted above from claim 1 (claim 12 similarly limited) which was introduced in the previous amendment to limit the claims as originally filed to material which has not yet been addressed by the Examiner in the present or former rejections of those claims, and allow claims 1 and 12 as currently amended (to correct a misspelled word).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the amendment be entered and the case passed to issue with claims 1 and 12.

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive

END920000176US1   29   S/N 09/815,312

assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the Application in condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Sincerely,

S. B. Cirulli, et al

By

Shelley M Beckstrand
Reg. No. 24,886

Date: 8 Sep 2005

Shelley M Beckstrand, P.C.
Patent Attorney
61 Glenmont Road
Woodlawn, VA 24381

Phone: 276 238-1972

END920000176US1   30   S/N 09/815,312